

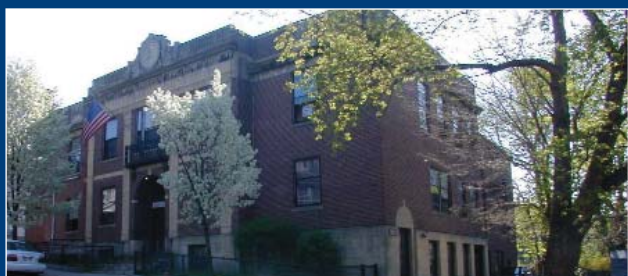
Priority Development Fund Planning Assistance for Housing Production

Case Study

Somerville uses MassHousing's Priority Development Fund's Planning Assistance for Housing Production (administered by DHCD) to plan for the revitalization of Union Square. To create round-the-clock vitality in a busy but poorly planned urban area, consultants recommended new mixed-use development containing both commercial space and housing.

Summary of the Initiative

The City of Somerville had recommended for reuse or redevelopment four city-owned parcels in Union Square. The City used \$42,000 in Planning Assistance for Housing Production funds to complete the planning work required to sell or lease these four parcels. The Recreation and SCAT are historic buildings and were considered for residential use only. The Kiley Barrel and the Public Safety sites were considered for full ground-up development scenarios.



Recreation Building



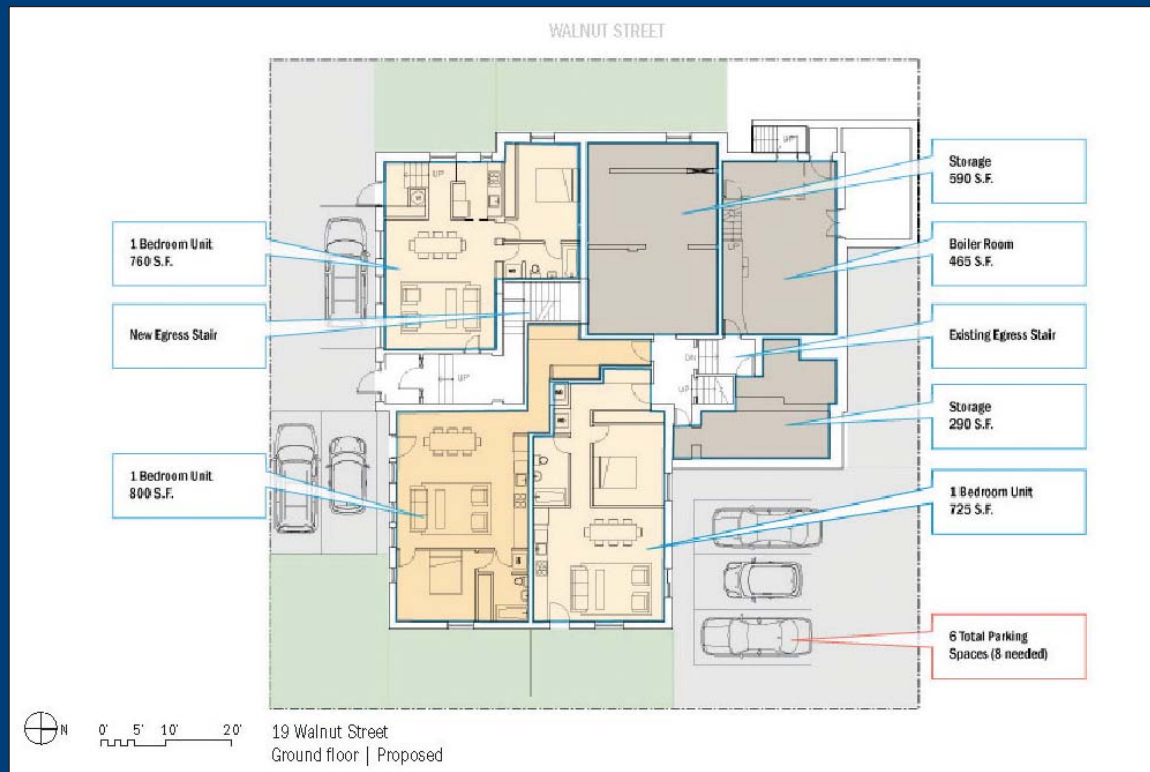
SCAT Building



Kiley Barrel Site



Public Safety Site



Proposed first floor plan of the Recreation Building

Additional Details

An existing conditions analysis revealed that most of Union Square falls within the Central Business District zone; relies entirely on buses (although an extension of the Green Line subway has been promised); is blanketed with parcels that require development attention; lacks a significant retail presence, and has many public spaces used for parking.

To create round-the-clock pedestrian vitality, consultants recommended appropriately dense mixed-use developments with commercial spaces on the ground floors and residential units above. A development scenario was proposed for each of the four parcels. Schematic designs were produced based upon market demands and economic feasibility. Each scenario required relief from the Somerville zoning code. The consultants proposed the creation of a new Planned Unit Development (PUD-C) overlay district in the eastern half of the Square to realize the development potential of the three largest sites, plus adjacent properties. PUD-C development projects would be eligible for height and density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, and other incentives, contingent on mandatory or voluntary inclusionary zoning requirements.

The preferred disposition path is for the City to adopt the PUD-C to encourage developers to acquire and bundle properties on their own, followed by an RFP for the municipal parcels to allow the free market to assist in creating a vibrant Union Square.

About the Priority Development Fund's Planning Assistance for Housing Production

In order to encourage communities to strategically plan for the production of new housing, MassHousing (The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency) has made a total of \$3 million in planning assistance available to cities and towns. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is administering the funds on MassHousing's behalf. Communities must apply to DHCD in order to be considered for funding.

For more information contact Miryam Bobadilla at DHCD at 617.573.1356 or Miryam.Bobadilla@state.ma.us



MassHousing
One Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
www.masshousing.com
617.854.1000

DHCD
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02114
www.mass.gov/dhcd
617.573.1100